

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 MADRID 004095

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: EUR A/S FRIED AND WHA PDAS SHAPIRO MEETINGS IN MADRID

Classified By: DCM Bob Manzanares, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary. EUR Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried, accompanied by WHA PDAS Charles Shapiro, visited Madrid November 15-16 for meetings with Spanish officials to discuss cooperation to advance Broader Middle East reform, the upcoming NATO summits, and areas for possible collaboration in Latin America. Fried and Shapiro met with Spanish National Security Advisor Carles Casajuana, Deputy Foreign Minister Bernardino Leon, MFA Director General for Foreign Policy Rafael Dezcallar, and ranking members of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defense commissions. A/S Fried thanked Spanish officials for Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos' participation in the Forum for the Future, emphasizing the importance of demonstrating a shared U.S.-EU commitment to democratic reforms in the Broader Middle East. Casajuana and Dezcallar indicated that Egypt is attempting to insert restrictive language regarding NGOs in the statement being prepared for the November 27-28 Barcelona Process Summit, much as it did at the Forum for the Future. Separately, Dezcallar requested USG public acknowledgement that the Spanish government had requested clarification of the alleged CIA rendition flights that landed at Spanish airfields. A/S Fried raised Spanish public support for the lifting of the EU China arms embargo, saying the USG had hoped to lower the profile of this contentious issue.

2. (C) On NATO, A/S Fried discussed the USG's rationale for the two-summit strategy, particularly the need to improve NATO's capability to meet current and future mission requirements and the USG's desire to use NATO as the primary forum for transatlantic security dialogue. Spanish counterparts agreed on the need to bring NATO's capabilities up to date, but also asserted that the EU should be the main European interlocutor in transatlantic discussions since more and more European foreign policy is being determined in Brussels. Casajuana and Dezcallar said Spain was generally pleased with plans for coordinating ISAF and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, but Dezcallar cautioned that the Zapatero government's mandate was limited. On Latin America, A/S Fried and PDAS Shapiro expressed concern regarding Venezuela's destabilizing influence in the region and said the Spanish arms sale to Chavez sent the wrong political message and contributed to Venezuela's weapons build-up. NSA Casajuana said the political decision to sell to Chavez had been made six months ago and that now it was "up to the companies" to complete the deal. However, Deputy FM Leon (protect) insisted that President Zapatero had not yet made a final decision on the aircraft component of the sale (the Spanish government subsequently announced its support for both the aircraft and ship components of the sale). On Cuba, Spanish officials said Madrid remains convinced of the need to maintain normal relations with the Castro regime in order to be in a position to influence his successors and requested the USG urge the Czech Republic and Poland to tone down their criticism of Spain in EU councils. They agreed with A/S Fried and PDAS Shapiro on the need to work together to resolve crises in Bolivia, Nicaragua, and elsewhere in Latin America. End Summary.

//MIDDLE EAST REFORM//

3. (C) A/S Fried thanked Spanish interlocutors for Spain's financial contribution to the Foundation for the Future and for FM Moratinos' participation in the Forum for the Future meeting in Bahrain. Fried said Moratinos' presence symbolized U.S.-EU unity in promoting democratic reforms in the Middle East. He discussed the outcomes of the meeting, acknowledging USG disappointment with Egypt's position on NGOs, but also the USG's determination to continue working in a persistent, but non-confrontational manner to advance democracy and freedom in the Broader Middle East. A/S Fried said the U.S. and Europe should have ambitious objectives, but understand that progress towards those objectives may be incremental.

4. (C) Casajuana said Spain was pleased to have been invited to Bahrain and noted that the EU was encountering similar problems with Egypt in the runup to the November 27-28 commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. Casajuana expressed confidence that acceptable language would eventually emerge, but said Egypt was sufficiently concerned that Mubarak would not be attending the event. Dezcallar indicated that Tunisia was raising objections on NGO language as well. Dezcallar said Spain was

pleased with USG support for the Alliance of Civilizations, which Spain believes will serve as a vehicle, through the UN, to encourage developing countries to become more involved in reforms.

//NATO//

15. (C) A/S Fried discussed the USG's view that the 2006 NATO Summit should focus on transformation and improving capabilities, holding off NATO enlargement until the 2008 Summit since candidate countries will not be prepared by 2006. He said the new challenges facing the U.S. and Europe in the 21st century had transformed NATO into a global actor and into the security instrument of the transatlantic democratic community. NATO members had to give the organization the tools to respond to its new and future missions. A/S Fried underlined the point that the USG was not implying a need for massive increases in European defense budgets, but rather suggesting that NATO had to be ready to act when called upon, rather than waiting while the Secretary General went to each member to solicit funds and other resources. He said Washington took seriously recommendations by European friends to consult more frequently with Europe, noting the increased use of the NAC as a forum for discussing issues of mutual interest. The U.S. was not talking about coalitions of the willing or about using NATO as a toolbox, but instead wanted all NATO members to agree on how to improve the capabilities of the organization as a whole.

16. (C) Casajuana said Spain was in full agreement on the need to improve NATO's capability to undertake new missions, exemplified by NATO operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, Casajuana said that Spain would have to place any increase in defense spending in the context of the European Security and Defense Policy for both practical and political reasons. As a practical matter, Casajuana suggested it would be in the USG's interest to see the EU strengthen its defense capacity, which the EU could then "bring together with NATO." Politically, said Casajuana, EU countries are increasingly transferring foreign policy decisions to Brussels, making the EU, rather than NATO, the proper forum for transatlantic dialogue on foreign policy issues. In response, A/S Fried noted that then-Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder had been among those calling for the increased use of NATO as a transatlantic link. He said the USG was not pursuing a fixed policy, but would instead work within NATO or with the EU as the circumstances warranted. A/S Fried emphasized, however, NATO remains the key vehicle for transatlantic security.

17. (C) Casajuana and Dezcallar said Spain was satisfied with the Op Plan and the direction of planning for the fusion of ISAF and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, though Dezcallar cautioned that Spain's role in Afghanistan was constrained by its limited mandate to participate in the ISAF mission only. By contrast, Dezcallar expressed frustration with the results of NATO earthquake relief operation in Pakistan, both because Spain had borne most of the costs of the operation and because logistical complications had resulted in negative press coverage of the Spanish role. Dezcallar said it was unfair that the NATO member that happened to hold the rotating command of the NATO Response Force should be expected to shoulder the financial burden of a given operation. A/S Fried agreed and said such problems highlighted the need to use the 2006 Summit to deal with practical solutions to improve NATO capabilities (including more common funding).

//CIA TRANSIT FLIGHTS//

18. (C) Dezcallar drew attention to the issue of the alleged transit of CIA aircraft through Spanish airports as a priority for the Zapatero Government. He requested that the USG acknowledge that the Spanish government had raised the issue of the flights with the Embassy in March 2005, as the impression that the Spanish government had ignored the flights was generating significant negative press. With respect to the flights themselves, Dezcallar asked that the U.S. provide as much information as possible so that the GOS would have the full facts of the case.

//EU CHINA ARMS EMBARGO//

19. (C) In his meeting with Deputy FM Leon, A/S Fried expressed the USG's desire to reduce the profile of the EU China arms embargo as a point of U.S.-EU friction. Spain's public support for the lifting of the arms embargo during the visit of Hu Jintao did not help our effort to keep the issue off the front burner. Leon said Spain had worked to keep that element of the visit low key, within the context of EU support for the Code of Conduct, and in the context of support for improved human rights practices by the Chinese government.

//VENEZUELA//

10. (C) A/S Fried and PDAS Shapiro reviewed USG concerns

regarding Venezuela, recounting the negative role President Chavez had played during the Summit of the Americas and the worrisome authoritarian drift of the Chavez government. Shapiro reviewed the new U.S. policy halting the sale of lethal weapons to Venezuela and said the USG would look very closely at any requests to transfer of U.S.-origin components to Venezuela. Fried and Shapiro expressed the USG's continued opposition to Spain's sale of aircraft and ships to the Chavez government, both because Chavez would use it to claim Spanish endorsement of his government and because it contributed to a massive and destabilizing Venezuelan arms buildup. Shapiro asked the Spanish government to speak out in defense of Venezuelan civil society, the Church, and the private sector; urge Spanish foundations and political parties to work with and help fund counterparts in Venezuela; and actively defend the rights of the large Spanish community in Venezuela. On Colombia, Shapiro urged increased Spanish support for the Colombian government and Spain's active assistance in the implementation of the Peace and Justice law.

11. (C) NSA Casajuana asserted that Spain had never seen the sale to Venezuela as a weapons sale since the contracts were for transport aircraft and patrol boats. He said the political decision to sell the items had been taken six months ago and that it was now up to the companies to complete the transaction. Casajuana said Spain had resisted efforts by Chavez to add political overtones to the transfer, but intended to carry through with the sale itself. A/S Fried said the USG viewed the transfer as a weapons sale and was certain Chavez would use it to claim Spanish political support.

12. (C) In a separate meeting, Deputy FM Leon (protect) insisted that President Zapatero had not yet made a final decision on the aircraft component of the sale to Venezuela and urged continued USG engagement on the issue. (NOTE: On November 25, Vice President Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega confirmed that DefMin Bono would travel to Caracas to finalize both the aircraft and naval vessel components of the sale. END NOTE). On political relations with Venezuela, Leon and Dezcallar said Spain does not view Chavez as a friend, but believes there is still a possibility that he may be influenced to play by democratic rules. Leon said that both President Zapatero and former Spanish President Felipe Gonzalez had delivered tough messages to Chavez in private meetings with him, and cited the "Sumate" and Carlos Ayala cases as instances where Spain had publicly criticized harassment of civil society activists. Leon and MFA Director General for Latin America Javier Sandomingo (who accompanied Dezcallar) expressed particular concern regarding Chavez' growing influence with smaller Latin American countries.

//CUBA//

13. (C) Shapiro urged Spanish officials to work with the USG to press for a democratic transition in Cuba rather than a succession and a continuation of the dictatorship. He said Spain and the U.S. would likely have to coordinate closely and respond to fast-moving events when Fidel Castro finally passed from the scene. Casajuana agreed on the need to work together on Cuba, but also said Spain favors a gradual transition rather than an abrupt, and possibly destabilizing shift. Noting that Spain's own transition took place over a period of several years and included members of the Franco regime, Casajuana said that Spain would focus on the words and deeds of Castro's successors rather than on their "Fidelista" pasts. Dezcallar asserted that in Cuba's post-Fidel era, "a Gorbachev is more likely than a Havel."

14. (C) MFA Director General for Latin America Sandomingo requested USG assistance in "convincing the Czech Republic and Poland that Spain is not a lifeline for the Castro regime." Sandomingo and Dezcallar said that Spain was being unfairly maligned for its initiative to suspend EU restrictive measures on Cuba. They insisted that Spain's effort to re-establish normal relations with Havana had not been a "total failure" and suggested "truce" on this issue in view of the fact that no country's policy had succeeded in dealing with Castro. A/S Fried and Shapiro pointed out that the Czechs and Poles saw Cuba through the prism of their recent pasts and had felt stifled within EU councils in attempting to promote their own views.

//NICARAGUA, BOLIVIA//

15. (C) Shapiro discussed the USG's concern that former Nicaraguan President Aleman may seek refuge in Spain for himself or others associated with his corrupt practices. This concern was compounded by Aleman's effort to destabilize the political situation in Nicaragua by allying himself with the Sandinistas. Shapiro discussed recent USG actions to constrain Aleman that left a clear impression among Nicaraguan observers that the USG was serious about confronting Aleman's negative actions. Sandomingo said that Spain's primary objective in Nicaragua was to break the

Aleman-Sandinista alliance, but that Aleman needed to be dealt with through incentives rather than penalties. He added that Aleman is still the power in the Liberal Party and must be dealt with as such. He said Aleman wanted to remain in Nicaragua, not go abroad and that most Nicaraguans did not view Aleman as being more corrupt than other Nicaraguan political figures. Though Sandomingo said Spain was not inclined to close its borders to Aleman, Dezcallar (Sandomingo's superior) left the issue open, saying the Spanish government would employ tough measures against Aleman if that proved necessary. A/S Fried noted that Spain had agreed to support the G-8's 2003 and 2004 declarations and the 2005 declaration at the Fourth Global Forum Against Fighting Corruption, pledging to deny safehaven to corrupt government officials. Dezcallar was unaware of these declarations and said he would look into them.

16. (C) Sandomingo discussed the recent visit of Bolivian cocalero leader Evo Morales to Madrid, where he met with FM Moratinos, Sandomingo, and Dezcallar. He described Morales as more reasonable in his private meetings than in his public events and said that Morales was difficult, but ultimately someone Spain could "work with" if necessary. Sandomingo said Spain expects Morales to win the Presidency and was reluctant to isolate him. Spanish interlocutors agreed with Shapiro's assessment that Bolivia's next leader, regardless of who it was, would face a chaotic political situation. Deputy FM Leon noted signs of a rift between Morales and Chavez, with Chavez withholding funding because Morales is reportedly showing too much independence. Shapiro responded that the USG has seen no evidence of such a rift but would investigate.

//CASSIRER ART RESTITUTION CASE//

17. (U) In his meeting with Dezcallar, A/S Fried raised the issue of the Cassirer art restitution case, urging the MFA to use its influence to convince the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum to engage in discussions with the claimants. Fried emphasized that the claimants preferred negotiations to a lengthy trial process. Director General for European and North American Affairs Jose Pons, who was present at the meeting and was aware of this issue, said that FM Moratinos himself had been involved in the case. (NOTE: Later in the day, Pons informed DCM that he had obtained an update on the case and said it would be difficult for the Spanish government to do much more since the painting was now the subject of a legal case in the U.S., which restricted the Spanish government's ability to intervene. However, Pons said the GOS would still urge the museum director to pursue a negotiated resolution with the claimants. END NOTE).

//MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS//

18. (SBU) DCM hosted a lunch for A/S Fried and PDAS Shapiro with six members of Parliament's Defense and Foreign Affairs commissions to discuss NATO, US-European cooperation on Middle East reform, and developments in Venezuela. Fried thanked the Parliamentarians for Spain's support of BMENA and for FM Moratinos' participation in the Forum for the Future. Rafael Estrella, Socialist Party speaker in the Foreign Affairs Commission, and his Popular Party counterpart Gustavo Aristegui emphasized their broad agreement that NATO should be maintained as the principal transatlantic security organization. They praised A/S Fried's comments on the importance of US-Europe consultation and communication. Jesus Cuadrado, Socialist Party speaker on the Defense Commission, discussed the Defense Commission's efforts to raise Spain's defense budget in the face of many competing domestic priorities.

19. (SBU) Fried underscored NATO's growing importance as the security arm of the transatlantic democratic community in the world, a point well received by the Spanish Parliamentarians. Fried reviewed the advantages both of common NATO assets, which would allow fast response, and of a cost-sharing mechanism that would reduce the financial burden on countries that commit troops to NATO operations. On Venezuela, the discussion reflected the split between the Socialists and the Popular Party on how to deal with Chavez, with Rafael Estrella defending the Spanish arms sale to Venezuela (and repeating Defense Minister Bono's claim that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld had not opposed the Spanish sale to

SIPDIS

Caracas) and Aristegui calling it a terrible mistake. All agreed with the Aristegui's characterization of Chavez as a menace to democracy in the region. As the meeting was breaking up, Parliamentarian Luis Mardones of the "Canaries Coalition" told Shapiro he was concerned about the fate of Canary Islanders living in Venezuela, especially in Yaracuy state, where agricultural land was being seized by the Venezuelan government.

//OUTREACH TO OPINION LEADERS//

120. (U) A/S Fried and PDAS Shapiro met with representatives of several of Madrid's leading think tanks and academic institutions, including figures from Elcano Institute, the Socialist-affiliated FRIDE think tank, Madrid's Autonomous University, and the Center for Peace Studies (CIP). Fried reviewed the USG's strong interest in Europe as a partner, not a counterweight to the U.S., emphasizing the transatlantic community's responsibility to work together to strengthen global security. He discussed BMENA and expressed appreciation for Spain's role in promoting Middle East reform. Fried highlighted the Secretary's success in brokering the Rafah crossing agreement, noting its importance for the Gaza withdrawal and further progress in the peace process. Meeting participants asked A/S Fried about the state of overall U.S. views towards Europe, whether the USG was prepared to press for further concessions from Israel in the Mideast peace process, and the tension between realist doctrine and the freedom agenda in U.S. foreign policy. A/S Fried noted that Secretary Rice had achieved a breakthrough by brokering the agreement on the Rafah crossing; stressed that progress on Israeli-Palestinian peace depended on building on the Gaza withdrawal, especially building functioning institutions in the future Palestinian state, not abstract pressure on Israel; and emphasized the USG's conviction that a key role of the transatlantic democratic community should be to press for democratic reforms beyond its borders, rather than attempt to insulate itself within a fixed sphere.

121. (U) A/S Fried and PDAS Shapiro cleared this message.
AGUIRRE